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▶ Reporter phone number:8168386743

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Suggested Web hed: Columbia resident Charles Shipman receives Master Pilot award

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Summary graf (30 words max) that tells readers why they should care: Shipman has compiled more than 4,000 hours piloting helicopters and 4,7000 hours piloting airplanes.

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Related elements (photos, graphics, multimedia)?:

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COLUMBIA – It was December 31, 1967, and Charles Shipman was looking forward to the Ice Bowl ▶ game ◀ between the Green Bay Packers and the Dallas Cowboys.

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Shipman was part ▶ of the crew ◀ of a helicopter unit created for President Lyndon B. Johnson, ▶'s ◀ based at ▶ added, based at ◀ his ranch when he was in office. The crew was ready to spend a quiet day watching the game, when the president and his wife, Lady Bird, came driving up the runway. The president wanted to go to church.

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“Here LBJ comes, bump, bump, over the rough ground with his car and Lady Bird,” Shipman said, sitting in his living room. ▶, ◀ ▶ moved, sporting a bright red polo with a small yellow plane stitched on its front. ◀ “And (LBJ) said ‘I don’t want this thing to get 25 feet off the ground.’”

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They took off, being careful to fly under the radar looking out for anyone on the main road who might see them.

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“I landed and let him out, and people came down to meet him, and – this is the point of the story – there was no press,” Shipman said of his first flight with a U.S. president. “An hour and a half later, he came back to the helicopter, and I flew him back to the ranch, 25 feet off the ground.”

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That night, the news reported the president had stayed on his ranch all day.

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“Mission accomplished,” Shipman said, with a smile that shows

mostly through his eyes.

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Tri-         focal glasses emphasize his brown eyes, framed by wrinkles in the corners. Rather than indicating age, the lines add to his friendly persona. Reserved until asked to retell a story, Shipman doesn't exaggerate details. He patiently acknowledges the work of others, and gets a look as though he is picturing each person and place he talks about.

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Now 74 and living in Columbia, Shipman has racked up more than over 4,000 hours piloting helicopters and more than 4,700 hours piloting airplanes in his life. On May 17, Shipman received added, the the Wright Brothers “ Master Pilot ” award for his 50 years of flight and safety in aviation. He is one of only 28 Missouri recipients of the award so far, one of just over 1,200 in the nation , and the only Master Pilot living in Columbia. Shipman lives on about 12 acres near Rock Bridge Memorial added, Memorial State Park. A glass display case in his house holds trinkets collected from his career; glasses from President Johnson's second inauguration, a glass plate welcoming you aboard Army One imprinted with President Nixon's signature. A large Christmas card hanging nearby shows a portrait of the White House in the winter and is signed by LBJ and Lady Bird.

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He owns his own airplane, a Piper Lance. He uses it frequently to visit his four children and their families scattered across the country.

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After buying his airplane in 1991, Shipman got involved with the Missouri Pilots Association and now serves as treasurer. Shipman, sporting a bright red polo with a small yellow plane stitched on its front taken from above, sporting a bright red polo with a small yellow plane stitched on its front, said it's the most active state pilots' association in the country. The Missouri Pilots association presented him the Master Pilot's Award this year at their annual convention, in conjunction with the Federal Aviation Administration.

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Shipman's son, Stan Shipman, 43, of Kansas City, has been hearing stories of his father's passion for flying for years.

deleted, said above, Almost all of his father's stories revolve around flying or the military, Stan Shipman said.

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"He's not real talkative unless he gets on a roll," Stan Shipman said. "But if he gets on a roll he leaves quite an impression. ... He just tells it as it is and shares a little about himself."

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The story of Charles Shipman's first flight has been passed down through the family. In 1935, Purdue University Airport in West Lafayette, Ind., would hold an open house so the public could see the advances in aeronautics. Shipman's mother held him, only a year and half old at the time, as they took a barnstorming ride in a bi-wing double cockpit airplane.

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"The way I heard it, he was just bawlin' and when he got in the plane and got in the air he just calmed down," Stanley Shipman said. "I always thought that was neat and kind of prophetic of what he'd be doing for a good part of his life."

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Charles Shipman became a pilot when he joined the ROTC at Cornell University. He learned to fly in the Army aviation program and graduated in 1955 as a commissioned officer.

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In Vietnam, from 1964 to '65, Shipman was with the 114th Aviation Company as part of the White Knight platoon. The 114th was the first Huey Helicopter Company that was deployed to Vietnam. It was the trial period of helicopter use in the war.

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At the time, the U.S. wasn't officially committed to the war. Because of that, the company was not allowed to fly the American flag. So the officers wrote to the governors of the 50 states asking permission to fly the state flags. Every state sent their flag to the company to be flown at their post in Vietnam.

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"Those flags were real important to us," Shipman said, pausing to think if he still had pictures of the flags that are still important to the veterans of the company today, now the 114th Aviation Company Association.



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The association still flies those flags at every reunion. In 2001, just before Sept. 11 [redacted] 9/11 [redacted], the reunion was held in Columbia over Memorial Day weekend. Shipman, along with the Boone County Fire Protection District, was instrumental in moving the flags through the parade and to the reunion base. Fire Chief Steve Paulsell worked closely with Shipman during the reunion and thinks of him as "a true American hero."

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"The term hero is used in our world very, very sparingly and with great judgment," Paulsell said. "I really value him as one of the special people I've met in my career. He's a very humble man ... Some of the things he and the others (in the 114th company) have done are phenomenal."

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Shipman also spent time in uncharted territories. In the early 60s, he supported mapmaking operations in Central and South America [redacted] where he supported mapmaking operations [redacted] for three years. The jungles and mountains were hard to traverse, and there were no roads, and [redacted]. [redacted] Shipman said [redacted] the helicopter was the best way to get around quickly, Shipman said. [redacted] but nowadays maps are made by satellite imagery. [redacted]

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Shipman retired as a Lieutenant Colonel [redacted] added, in [redacted] 1975 after 20 years in the Army.

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"I think it's interesting ... looking back," Stan Shipman said. "Throughout his little segments of life he maintained his flying and even today it's interesting how it's always been pervasive throughout his life."